

VI MANAGEMENT GOALS

The central focus of this Plan is an Ecosystem Approach to management of the Great Valley Riparian Habitat communities in the Wildlife Area. This focus is implemented through these Management Goals. These Goals are drawn from the information generated through the Planning Process and express the direction that ongoing operation of the Wildlife Area will take. Policy direction is organized into Biological, Public Use, Facility Maintenance and Management Coordination Elements. Goals are established to provide broad policy parameters and individual Tasks direct specific actions to implement the various Goals.

It is important to note, however, that the implementation of many of the Tasks that are identified in this Plan is dependent upon the availability of additional staff to perform those respective Tasks. The establishment of an adequate operations and maintenance budget is also required to support the management of the Wildlife Area. The Wildlife Area is currently not budgeted and new resources will be required in order to accomplish the tasks identified in this Chapter. Chapter VII identifies the specific resources that will be required to manage the Wildlife Area in the future.

❖ Definition of Management Terms

The Comprehensive Management Plan is intended to be compatible with the Department's standardized format for management plans. The latest version of that format is: *A Guide and Annotated Outline for Writing Land Management Plans*, dated March 2002. This basic format compatibility will facilitate efficient use by Department personnel and assist comparisons with other management plans. Accordingly, a consistent terminology is employed in the expression of management Goals. To acquaint the reader with this terminology, the following terms and meanings are established for use in this plan:

Element: refers to any biological unit, public use activity, facility maintenance or management coordination program as defined below for which Goals have been prepared and presented within this Plan.

Biological Element: refers to habitat communities for which specific management Goals have been developed within this Plan.

Public Use Elements: refers to any recreational use or other activity, appropriate to and compatible with the purposes for which this property was acquired.

Facility Maintenance Element: refers to the maintenance and administrative program that helps provide for orderly and beneficial management of the Wildlife Area.

Management Coordination Element: refers to the management programs that are supportive of the Sacramento River Conservation Area and compatible with the activities of other public and private conservation agencies.

Biological Goal: refers to a statement of the intended long-range results of management based upon the feasibility of maintaining, natural riverine processes, enhancing or restoring species populations and/or habitat.

Public Use Goal: refers to a statement of the desired type and level of public use compatible with the Biological Element Goals previously specified within this Plan and the actions required to support such use.

Facility Maintenance Goal: refers to a statement of the desired type and level of facility maintenance that are required to achieve the Biological Element Goals previously specified within this Plan.

Management Coordination Goal: refers to a statement of the desired type and level of management coordination activities that are required to achieve the Biological Element Goals previously specified within this Plan.

Tasks: refers to an individual project or work element that implements the Goals and is useful in planning operation and maintenance budgets.

The Management Goals are organized into Elements, Goals and Tasks, which establish a hierarchy of management direction for the Wildlife Area. Figure 9 depicts this hierarchical relationship. Elements relate to the broad categories of consideration, Goals define objectives within the Elements and Tasks establish specific actions to attain the Goals. Together these Elements, Goals and Tasks express the policy direction that will guide the management of the Wildlife Area.

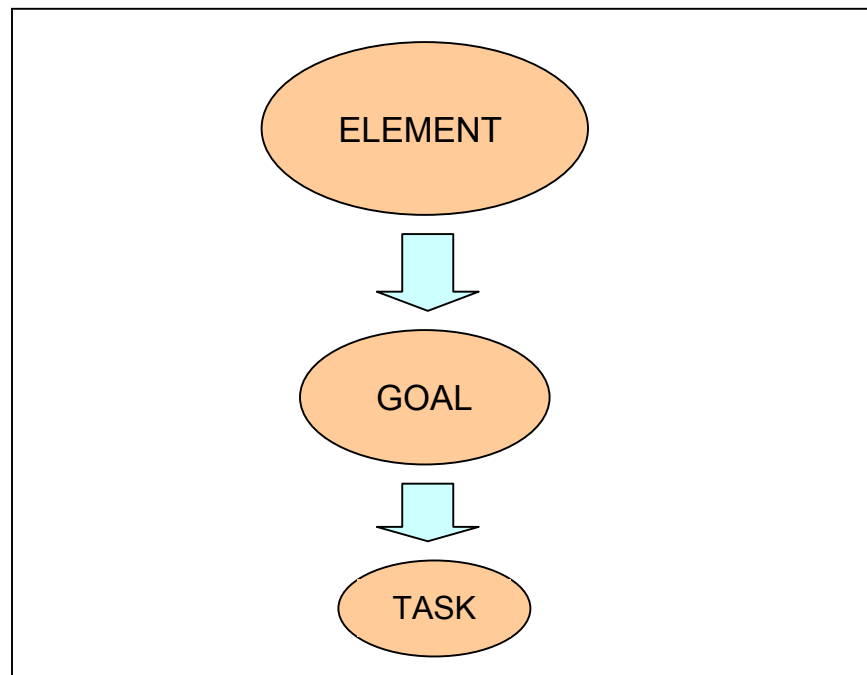


Figure 9. Management Goals Hierarchy

❖ **Biological Element: Goals and Management Constraints**

Great Valley Riparian Habitat - Under the Ecosystem Approach to management of the Wildlife Area, a single Biological Element is established to incorporate the wide range of actions that are proposed to implement this Plan. The Sacramento River Wildlife Area features the Great Valley Riparian Forest community according to the Natural Diversity Database (NDDDB) / Holland (California Department of Fish and Game, 2002). This categorization includes the following natural communities:

- ◆ **Coastal and Valley Freshwater Marsh**
- ◆ **Great Valley Cottonwood Riparian Forest**
- ◆ **Great Valley Mixed Riparian Forest**
- ◆ **Great Valley Valley Oak Riparian Forest**
- ◆ **Great Valley Willow Scrub**

The Coastal and Valley Freshwater Marsh and the Great Valley Riparian Scrub communities do not technically fall into the Great Valley Riparian Forest community according to NDDDB) / Holland. They are included in this Element because they are serial communities that often succeed to the Great Valley Cottonwood Forest. For the purposes of this Plan, these communities are treated as components of the Great Valley Riparian Forest series.

All of the Special Status Species occurring in the Wildlife Area are positively associated with the Great Valley Riparian Habitat. Consistent with the Ecosystem Approach to management, the preservation and restoration of the Great Valley Riparian Habitat is the central management strategy for the mutual benefit of Special Status Species, game species and other native species. This management approach is also beneficial for the support of wildlife-related public recreation uses in the Wildlife Area. The following Goals and Tasks are established to support the continued viability of the Great Valley Riparian habitat communities.

Biological Element Goals

- 1. *Contribute to the Overall Goal of the Sacramento River Conservation Area: “Preserve remaining riparian habitat and reestablish a continuous riparian ecosystem along the Sacramento River between Red Bluff and Chico and reestablish riparian vegetation along the river from Chico to Verona.”***

The Department is involved in a partnership to preserve and restore the ecosystem along the river that involves numerous local, State, federal and private entities. The Department will continue to contribute to this broad goal through strong participation in the SRCAF as well as its own direct efforts to preserve and reestablish this important ecosystem.

Tasks

- a. Support the SRCAF through ongoing participation in its programs and activities.
- b. Manage the Wildlife Area under an Ecosystem Approach through an adaptive management process.
- c. Coordinate habitat management activities with other public and private conservation agencies.
- d. Support a flow regime for the river that is supportive of natural riparian habitat and Special Status Species to the maximum extent practical.

- e. Continue to acquire key habitat properties, from willing sellers, with the objective of establishing substantial contiguous areas of permanent habitat conservation.

2. *Maintain and Enhance Habitat for Special Status Species.*

The Ecosystem Approach to managing the Wildlife Area is based on the concept that the enhancement of the quality and quantity of riparian habitat will result in the promotion of species diversity. This enhancement will be the result of the natural riverine processes that create and maintain riparian habitat communities. Compliance with State and federal endangered species regulations will be a key test for all proposed management actions within the Wildlife Area. This compliance will be directed by consultation with the USFWS and NOAA fisheries regarding federally listed species and internal coordination within the Department for the California Endangered Species Act.

Tasks

- a. Evaluate all future management programs for potential impacts on Special Status Species and consult with appropriate agencies.
- b. Continue to monitor the status of Special Status Species in cooperation with other land management and conservation entities.
- c. Monitor public uses for potential impacts to Special Status Species and take appropriate actions to mitigate impacts such as seasonal closures of selected areas, etc.
- d. Evaluate the reintroduction of extirpated, native species.

3. *Support the Natural Processes that Result in the Creation and Enhancement of Habitat.*

The continued viability of the riparian habitat for Special Status Species, other native species and game species is dependent upon the natural processes of river meander, erosion, deposition and flooding. Consistent with the Principles of the SRCAF, the maintenance and enhancement of these natural processes are vital to meeting the objectives of this Plan and the SRCAF. Where physical changes are proposed to support natural processes, appropriate analysis is required to determine that such actions will not cause significant adverse effects to private property, major public investments or public safety.

Tasks

- a. Allow the natural river meander process to modify the configuration of the sites in the Wildlife Area to the maximum extent practical.
- b. Preclude bank protection in the Wildlife Area except in extreme, isolated situations where it is determined that protection of major public investments or public safety require such measures with appropriate mitigation.
- c. Evaluate bank protection projects in the vicinity of the Wildlife Area to ensure that they will not have negative impacts on the Wildlife Area.
- d. Implement a limited river meander through the removal of artificial impediments to the natural riverine processes (bank protection, small private levees, etc.), where contiguous areas of permanent habitat conservation are conducive to such actions.

- e. Evaluate proposed changes to the river's flow regime to determine any potential negative impact on habitat or wildlife.

4. Maximize the Habitat Value of Wildlife Area Property.

The Wildlife Area can effectively serve Special Status Species, other native species and game species under the Ecosystem Approach to management only if natural, riparian habitat communities exist. In some locations, active horticultural restoration is required to reestablish riparian habitat communities where human-induced changes have precluded the natural process required for successful recruitment, establishment and succession of native riparian communities. These changes include the modification of the river's natural flow regime of the river and competition from nonnative, invasive vegetation. Thorough scientific analysis of the need for and appropriate form of active horticultural restoration should continue as standard procedure. Compatibility with the Sacramento River Flood Control Project should also continue to be a requirement of any restoration project.

Tasks

- a. Facilitate the natural restoration and maintenance of habitat through control of nonnative, invasive vegetation as part of ongoing management.
- b. Evaluate, in detail, the need for restoration of the remaining areas that are dominated by nonnative, invasive vegetation and have the potential to support diverse native riparian communities. Prioritize the restoration of these areas and actively pursue funding.
- c. Evaluate, in detail, the need for restoration of future additions to the Wildlife Area that lack natural riparian vegetation. Actively pursue the required restoration of such areas.
- d. Evaluate, in detail, the need for restoration of natural riparian areas where the restoration of natural riverine processes is insufficient to support the continued viability of the habitat. Actively pursue the required restoration of any such areas.
- e. Eradicate or control nonnative, invasive vegetation as part of all restoration activities.
- f. Design restoration projects to be compatible with the Sacramento River Flood Control Project and consistent with the standards of the Reclamation Board.
- g. Design habitat restoration projects to address considerations of adjoining private landowners consistent with the Goals of this Plan.
- h. Include professional cultural resources analysis of all restoration areas as part of the restoration Planning Process and protect significant cultural resources.

5. Support Scientific Research and Monitoring.

Scientific information is the basis for good management decisions regarding the Wildlife Area. An important role of the Department is to maintain and expand its research and monitoring activities and to support research activities by educational institutions, conservation organizations and other entities. An important focus of research should be the evaluation of active horticultural restoration and other management actions to support Adaptive

Management of the Wildlife Area in coordination with the CALFED Program.

Tasks

- a. Pursue additional funding and partnerships for research and monitoring activities, especially those involving the CALFED Program.
- b. Expand Department research and monitoring activities commensurate with available resources.
- c. Implement a program to regularly monitor public use impacts on habitats, Special Status Species, other native species and game species.
- d. Support the use of the Wildlife Area for scientific research and monitoring activities by outside entities.
- e. Support research that includes the following:
 - Flow regime options intended to support ecosystem functions.
 - Conceptual models to support restoration of habitat.
 - The development of indicators of ecosystem function.
 - Monitoring and evaluation of restoration efforts and other management actions.
 - The value of riparian vegetation to aquatic organisms.
 - The potential threat to the ongoing viability of the riparian habitat from wildfires.

6. *Support the Conservation of Wildlife Habitat on Privately owned Land along the Sacramento River.*

A substantial area of natural riparian habitat is located on privately owned land along the river in the vicinity of the Wildlife Area. These private lands are an important part of the ecosystem that supports the wide range of wildlife species. The policy of the Department is to encourage and support the maintenance of this habitat resource.

Tasks

- a. Provide technical information and advice to private landowners regarding habitat conservation.
- b. Continue to pursue conservation easements, from willing sellers, as a means of ensuring permanent preservation of privately owned habitat property.
- c. Annually monitor compliance with conservation easements held by the Department.

Management Constraints on the Biological Element

The Goals of the Biological Element are constrained by a range of natural and human-induced factors. Effective management of the Wildlife Area requires that these factors be identified and considered. This Plan recognizes that the Wildlife Area exists within the context of the many values and needs that are important to the neighbors of the Wildlife Area, the recreational users of the Wildlife Area and the people of California in general. Important constraints that impact the Biological Element include:

Environmental factors

- The modification of the river's flow regime, bank stabilization and other existing physical constraints limit river meander and the resulting natural creation of habitat.
- An extensive network of small private levees has altered the natural frequency and duration of flooding of riparian communities in the floodplain.

- The altered flow regime of the river and nonnative, invasive vegetation limit the natural recruitment of native vegetation.
- Impacts from neighboring land uses such as chemical over-spray and runoff may conflict with habitat and wildlife species.
- A wide range of factors including habitat fragmentation, water pollution and competition from introduced flora and fauna negatively impact populations of Special Status Species, game species and other species.

Legal, political or social factors

- Removal of physical constraints to river processes that could have beneficial effects on habitat creation and maintenance may impact other property outside of the Wildlife Area.
- Some entities hold deeded rights for access, utility lines, water conveyance, levee maintenance and other uses on Wildlife Area property.
- A standardized approach to active horticultural restoration has not yet been developed and approved by the Reclamation Board. Continued post project monitoring is necessary to provide additional information regarding the degree to which restoration actually alters flood flows.

Financial factors

- Limited funding for ongoing staffing and operations and maintenance is the greatest existing management constraint for the Wildlife Area.
- Funding is competitive for active horticultural restoration projects. This factor has delayed the improvement of habitat values.

❖ **Public Use Element: Goals and Management Constraints**

Compatible public use of all portions of the Wildlife Area has been permitted since initial acquisition of the Wildlife Area. This provision of compatible public use is consistent with the Mission of the Department and the Purpose of wildlife areas. Such uses are generally low intensity and low impact recreation uses that are related to the wildlife that inhabits the Wildlife Area and the adjacent Sacramento River. They include hunting, fishing, hiking, boat camping, beach activities, wildlife observation, photography, interpretation and environmental education. These uses help to support the local economy. This Public Use Element incorporates management actions that are supportive of the public recreation use of the Wildlife Area. This Element also addresses cooperation and compatibility with Wildlife Area neighbors.

Public Use Goals

1. ***Support Compatible Public Use through Consistent Regulations.***
Public use of the Wildlife Area is regulated by the Department pursuant to the California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Division 1, Sections 550 to 552. These regulations currently differentiate between the Sacramento River Wildlife Area and the Merrill's Landing Wildlife Area. The consolidation of the regulations for these two Wildlife Areas as well as other actions to make the public use regulations along the Sacramento River as "seamless" as possible are proposed by this Plan.

Tasks

- a. Establish consistent regulations for the existing Sacramento River and Merrill's Landing Wildlife Areas as a single Wildlife Area.
- b. Evaluate the revision of Wildlife Area Regulations to:

- Combine the Sacramento River and Merrill's landing Wildlife Areas with consistent regulations.
- Permit boat camping on gravel bars outside of riparian vegetation.
- Establish a spring turkey hunting season.
- c. Biennially review the regulations for the Wildlife Area to ensure that regulations are supportive of the goals of this Plan and assist in the:
 - Recovery of Special Status Species.
 - Maintenance of healthy and sustainable populations of game species and other species.
 - Protection of the public health and safety.
 - Maintenance of cooperative relationships with adjoining landowners.
- d. Coordinate the Wildlife Area regulations with those of the USFWS, DPR and other managers of public land along the Sacramento River, as appropriate.

2. *Inform the Public of Compatible Recreation Use Opportunities.*

Multiple forms of public communication are required to inform the public of the recreation opportunities that exist in the Wildlife Area. This information may take the form of online data in websites and hard copy information in published documents. The combining of access and public use information with the other public property managers along the river is necessary to provide the information to the public in an effective and cost efficient manner.

Tasks

- a. Continue to support the provision of user friendly, online information regarding access, locations, compatible uses and use regulations for public access lands along the river.
- b. Develop a brochure with mapping to identify public access lands along the river.
- c. Whenever possible, develop and present materials in conjunction with other public property managers along the river.
- d. Design communications to emphasize legal access and discourage trespass in all information dissemination.

3. *Identify the Wildlife Area through a Signing Program.*

The Units of the Wildlife Area should be clearly identified to the public in order to facilitate compatible public use and to help control related impacts on adjoining properties. A coordinated signing program is required to adequately identify the Wildlife Area. Signing compatibility with other public properties along the river is important for maximum public utility.

Tasks

- a. Develop and implement a coordinated signing program for the Wildlife Area to:
 - Identify the Wildlife Area at legal land access locations and provide generalized use regulations.
 - Identify the Wildlife Area at locations where trespass across adjoining property becomes an issue.
 - Identify the Wildlife Area on the river at upper and lower limits of sites and at .25 mile intervals along the river and provide generalized use regulations.

- Identify the Wildlife Area at all gates to the Wildlife Area and explain the vehicular access prohibition.
- Coordinate signing design with other public property managers.
- b. Provide interpretive displays at key public access locations.
- c. Annually inventory all signing following the high flow season.

4. *Expand Opportunities for Public Access.*

Existing access to the Wildlife Area is primarily from the river. Additional compatible recreation use can be facilitated through the acquisition of new public, land access rights and use of land access across other public properties. Primitive parking areas and trails to connect from parking areas to the river are also needed to facilitate public use. The Department should take a lead role in working with other public habitat managers to establish additional access to public habitat areas.

Tasks

- a. Pursue the acquisition of additional land access rights from willing sellers where substantial compatible public use potential exists.
- b. Identify opportunities for public access to the Wildlife Area across other publicly owned lands in information provided to the public.
- c. Pursue partnerships for maintenance of public access such as the Site 21 Fishing Access maintained by Glenn County.
- d. Provide primitive parking areas at public land access points.
- e. Provide primitive pedestrian pathways to the river at key locations with public land access.
- f. Incorporate primitive pedestrian pathways to the river and other desired destinations as part of restoration projects.
- g. Coordinate primitive pedestrian pathway connections with pathways on adjoining publicly owned property.
- h. Pursue opportunities within the Wildlife Area to provide ADA accessibility in all programs and facilities and cooperate with other public habitat managers to provide appropriate accessibility to the riparian habitat experience for all persons, including persons with disabilities.

5. *Support Environmental Education.*

The Wildlife Area can serve as a “living classroom” for science and environmental education purposes. Within the limits of staffing and resources, support will be provided to educational uses of the Wildlife Area.

Tasks

- a. Support environmental educational use of the Wildlife Area through staff assistance, interpretive materials and the provision of permits for group activities.
- b. Support the development of multi agency visitors / interpretive centers.

6. *Provide Law Enforcement to Protect Habitat and Wildlife and to Help Mitigate Impacts on Adjacent Landowners.*

One way that the Department protects the Wildlife Area’s habitat and wildlife resources of the Wildlife Area through wildlife protection officers. To accomplish this end, patrol of the Wildlife Area from both the land and water is necessary. Coordination with other public habitat managers along

the river may also provide the opportunity to expand service in the most cost-effective manner.

Tasks

- a. Patrol the Wildlife Area regularly from the land and the river to enforce Wildlife Area regulations.
- b. Assist adjoining landowners in the resolution of trespassing and other mutual concerns.
- c. Continue to coordinate with other law enforcement agencies to manage large, public river float events.
- d. Pursue joint law enforcement patrols with other public habitat managers along the river.

Management Constraints on the Public Use Element

The Goals of the Public Use Element are constrained by a range of natural and human-induced factors. Effective management of the Wildlife Area requires that these factors be identified and considered. This Plan recognizes that the Wildlife Area exists within the context of the many values and needs that are important to the neighbors of the Wildlife Area, the recreational users of the Wildlife Area and the people of California in general. Important constraints include:

Environmental factors

- There is the potential for degradation of vegetation and habitat resources by vehicular, pedestrian and riding activity (horses and mountain bikes).
- There is the potential for disturbance of animal species by human activities and by pets.

Legal, political or social factors

- The public agencies and private entities that manage habitat property along the river have different missions, objectives and procedures that must be recognized and accommodated.
- Public use involves the potential for trespass and other related impacts on adjoining property if adequate public information and education is not provided.
- Cultural features require protection from vandalism, collecting and destruction as part of projects involving physical changes.

Financial factors

- Limited funding for staffing, operations and maintenance is a substantial constraint for expanded public use of the Wildlife Area. Appropriate management of public recreation use will require additional resources.

❖ Facility Maintenance Element: Goals and Management Constraints

The effective management of the Wildlife Area will require that a regular maintenance program be established to accommodate the Goals and Tasks of the Biological and Public Use Elements. This Maintenance Element identifies the basic direction that such a program should take and the components that it should include.

Facility Maintenance Goals

1. *Secure the Habitat from Vehicular Trespass.*

The riparian habitat can be substantially damaged and degraded by uncontrolled

vehicular traffic. It is necessary that the Wildlife Area be gated, signed and monitored to protect the habitat and wildlife resources.

Tasks

- a. Install gates and fencing or other physical access controls, where necessary, at all property entrances, primitive roads and locations where unapproved, vehicular access occurs on a regular basis.
- b. Install signing at all property entrances, primitive roads and locations to provide notice that vehicular access is not permitted.
- c. Regularly monitor and maintain access controls.
- d. Install and maintain vehicular access controls as part of all restoration projects.
- e. Following implementation of access control and signing aggressively enforce the vehicular prohibition on the Wildlife Area.

2. *Control Invasive, Nonnative Plant Species.*

Nonnative, invasive plant species such as johnson grass, Ailanthus and Arundo can dominate the vegetation in localized areas and they provide poor wildlife habitat value. Concentrations of these plants can effectively suspend the normal succession patterns and preclude the natural processes of habitat creation and improvement. Ongoing control of invasive species, which may involve physical removal, chemical treatments and burning, is necessary in order to achieve the Goals of the Biological Element.

Tasks

- a. Initially evaluate all Units to determine problem sites and determine cost efficient controls of invasive species.
- b. Initially treat identified problem sites in coordination with the Department's Pesticide Unit.
- c. Subsequently treat identified problem sites as required.
- d. Annually evaluate the status of invasive species on each Unit.
- e. Coordinate the control of invasive species with the CALFED Environmental Restoration Program.

3. *Maintain Management Area Signing.*

The coordinated signing program identified in the Public Use Element will have substantial benefits. These benefits will be realized only if there is a regular, ongoing signing maintenance program to deal with the effects of flooding and vandalism.

Tasks

- a. Establish a monitoring and maintenance program for all signing.
- b. Install additional signing in areas where habitat degradation, trespass or other problems occur.
- c. Annually evaluate the effectiveness of the coordinated signing program and modify as required.

4. *Maintain Access Improvements.*

The Public Use Element proposes additional public, land access, primitive parking areas and primitive trails connecting to the river. These new improvements will increase the utility of the Wildlife Area for public use but they will require regular maintenance.

Tasks

- a. Establish a regular monitoring and maintenance program for all access improvements maintained by the Department.
- b. Annually grade as required and trim primitive trails to maintain pedestrian access.
- c. Maintain fire access and breaks and buffers installed in conjunction with restoration projects.

5. *Control Dumping of Refuse and Vehicles.*

Dumping of refuse and vehicles is a minor problem in the Wildlife Area that has the potential to grow rapidly as it has in other natural areas. A regular control program is required to identify problems and quickly remove materials so that dumping does not appear to be an accepted activity.

Tasks

- a. Establish a regular monitoring program to address dumping.
- b. Promptly remove any refuse, vehicles or other dumped materials.
- c. Install additional signing in areas where repeated dumping occurs.
- d. Aggressively enforce the littering and antidumping regulations.
- e. Promote and support volunteer cleanup and maintenance projects.

Management Constraints on the Facility Maintenance Element

The Goals of the Facility Maintenance Element are constrained by the natural disturbance regime of the river as well as social factors and budgetary limitations. Effective management of the Wildlife Area requires that these factors be identified and considered. This Plan recognizes that these factors impact the maintainability of the Wildlife Area and the limited improvements that are proposed. Important constraints the Facility Maintenance Element include:

Environmental factors

- Annual flooding along the river and the related damage to improvements practically limits the nature of potential recreation improvements.
- Annual flooding along the river will remove and damage signing and other improvements increasing maintenance costs.
- The relative isolation of some Units makes close monitoring of regulation violations difficult.

Legal, political or social factors

- The addition of signing and access improvements to the Wildlife Area will result in public expectations for maintenance of these improvements.
- The illegal use of four-wheel drive vehicles and all terrain vehicles increases the potential for habitat degradation.
- The physical accessibility of the Wildlife Area from some adjoining properties facilitates vehicular traffic in violation of the Wildlife Area regulations.

Financial factors

- Limited funding for staffing and O& M is a substantial maintenance constraint.

❖ **Management Coordination Element: Goals and Management Constraints**

The Sacramento River Conservation Area Forum is a multi-agency effort to restore the ecosystem along the river. In order to ensure that the actions of the various agencies are compatible and consistent and to maximize the effectiveness of individual actions, there is a need for ongoing management coordination. The recommendations of the *Sacramento River Public Recreation Access Study*, which incorporated input from the various public agencies, were evaluated for incorporation in this Plan. This Management Coordination Element establishes Goals and Tasks to define the Department's role in this cooperative effort. This coordination includes both public agencies and private landowners and interests.

Management Coordination Goals

1. *Cooperate with Adjacent, Private Landowners to Address Mutual Concerns.*

About 40 % of the Wildlife Area adjoins privately owned, agricultural land. It is important that the Department communicate with its neighbors to help identify any issues at an early stage and attempt to resolve concerns in a mutually satisfactory manner. Physical changes to the Wildlife Area should also be subject to early notice, information exchange and appropriate mitigation of impacts. The Department is involved with the development of a Good Neighbor Policy by the SRCAF, which is intended to establish additional standards and processes for resolution of interface issues.

Tasks

- a. Maintain contact with adjacent neighbors to discuss mutual concerns and opportunities.
- b. Implement improvements and operational revisions to resolve issues with adjacent landowners that are consistent with the Goals of this Plan and compatible with the funding available to the Wildlife Area.
- c. Design habitat restoration projects to address considerations of adjoining landowners consistent with the Goals of this Plan, including but not limited to:
 - Provision of access controls and access for emergency and utility services
 - Consideration of appropriate fire access and breaks
 - Consideration of appropriate buffers where new planting directly adjoins agricultural crops.
 - Use of natural predation control strategies
- d. Continue to consult with adjoining landowners as part of the development of plans for proposed restoration projects and other physical changes to the Wildlife Area.
- e. Continue to participate in the activities of the SRCAF including information presentations and solicitation of input regarding proposed restoration projects and other physical changes to the Wildlife Area.
- f. Commission field surveys as needed to identify specific property boundaries where uncertainty has contributed to substantive violations of Wildlife Area regulations.

2. *Participate in an Ongoing Management Coordination Structure for Habitat and Recreation Lands along the River.*

In order to maximize the environmental and public benefit of the multiple agency ownership of land along the Sacramento River, the various public and private entities have identified the need to establish an ongoing management coordination organization as part of the *Sacramento River Public Recreation Access Study*. This action would further the objectives of the Memorandum of Understanding between the Department, DPR and USFWS that was executed in 2001.

Tasks

- a. Take a lead role in the formation and functioning of a permanent management coordination structure for habitat conservation and recreation agencies along the river.

3. *Support the Hamilton City Flood Damage Reduction and Ecosystem Restoration Project.*

The ongoing levee relocation project in the Hamilton City area has the potential of providing major flood damage reduction benefits to that community, coupled with major ecosystem restoration benefits. The Department has the opportunity to support this US Army Corps of Engineer's project through long-term ownership and management of over 500 acres of potential riparian habitat adjacent to the Pine Creek - West Subunit. These properties have been largely acquired with public funds and it is anticipated that additional public funding will be available for the restoration of riparian vegetation so that the net cost to the Department will be very small in comparison to the benefit to the ecosystem. This project area combines properties managed by several agencies, has broad local support and provides an important opportunity to demonstrate the compatibility of flood protection and environmental benefits. It can also add substantial area for public recreation use at a location that has excellent access from both the river and the land. Additionally, the concentration of almost 4000 acres of habitat land, managed by six government and nonprofit agencies, offers the unique opportunity for these groups to work together to develop a coordinated plan for habitat conservation, public recreation and environmental education.

Tasks

- a. Actively support the Hamilton City project subject to review of the final configuration of the project and the related impacts on and benefits to wildlife habitat.
- b. Plan to expand the Wildlife Area by the addition of available property adjacent to the Pine Creek – West Subunit.
- c. Support the restoration of riparian habitat proposed in conjunction with the Hamilton City project.
- d. Support the development and implementation of a multi-agency master plan for the large concentration of publicly owned habitat property in the Pine Creek / Hamilton City area.

4. *Coordinate with Other Law Enforcement Agencies*

Law enforcement needs and jurisdiction along the river overlap and resources of each agency are limited. Various services are provided by the four counties, the California Highway Patrol, USFWS, DPR and NOAA Fisheries. Through greater coordination and the potential provision of joint services, improved and expanded service may be possible.

Tasks

- a. Meet regularly with law enforcement staff from County Sheriff Departments, DPR, USFWS, and other agencies as appropriate to coordinate law enforcement activities and explore options for cooperative programs.
- b. Continue to coordinate with other law enforcement agencies to manage large, public river float events.
- c. Pursue joint funding requests with other law enforcement entities to address law enforcement concerns along the river.
- c. Pursue joint law enforcement patrols with other public habitat managers along the river.

5. *Coordinate with Local Public Service Agencies.*

The Wildlife Area is adjacent to private land holdings and coordination with local fire protection and mosquito and vector control agencies is necessary to help ensure that public safety is protected and that the Wildlife Area is a good neighbor to adjoining landowners.

Tasks

- a. Communicate regularly with local fire protection agencies and coordinate reasonable fire protection strategies consistent with the Goals of this Plan.
- b. Communicate regularly with local mosquito and vector control agencies and coordinate reasonable mosquito and vector control strategies consistent with the Goals of this Plan.

6. *Share Resources and Equipment with Other Public Habitat Management Agencies.*

The Memorandum of Understanding between the Department, DPR and USFWS provides for sharing of equipment and resources for the lands that they manage along the river. Continued implementation of this policy is important. There may also be an opportunity to expand this cooperation to other agencies including the counties that maintain facilities along the river.

Tasks

- a. Continue to implement the existing Memorandum of Understanding and evaluate additional opportunities for sharing of equipment and resources.
- b. Evaluate the potential to include additional agencies in an agreement for sharing of equipment and resources.

7. *Pursue Alternative Management Mechanisms and Property Transfers and with other Public Property Management Agencies.*

Along the river there are situations where the configuration and location of individual properties does not lend itself to efficient land management. These situations include Department properties, and the properties managed by other agencies. In order to maximize the benefits of public lands and provide more cost-effective service, transfers of property ownership and/or transfers of management responsibility should be evaluated. Appendix H, Land Management Alternatives identifies specific options for management of the Wildlife Area.

Tasks

- a. Consolidate the Sacramento River and Merrill's Landing Wildlife Areas as a single Wildlife Area under the management of one Region.
- b. Evaluate the transfer of public property to or from the Department in order to facilitate more efficient management areas, including but not limited to the following:
 - The transfer of Reclamation Board and State Lands Commission property management along the river to the Department to permit habitat management as part this Plan or by the USFWS.
 - The transfer (*fee or management agreement*) of the Pine Creek East Subunit to the Department of Parks and Recreation to facilitate management as part of the Bidwell - Sacramento River State Park.
- c. Evaluate alternatives for a consolidated land management function in the Pine Creek / Hamilton City area where a multi-agency master plan is proposed.
- d. Evaluate, where appropriate, the potential for management of property within the Wildlife Area on an interim or permanent basis by other agencies or nonprofit entities.

Management Constraints on the Management Coordination Element

The Goals of the Management Coordination Element are constrained by a range of environmental social and financial factors. Effective management of the Wildlife Area requires that these factors be identified and considered. This Plan recognizes that these factors affect the potential for maximized management coordination. Important constraints that impact the Management Coordination Element include:

Environmental factors

- The various agencies that provide services along the river have different locations for their service centers and coordination of some services may be limited by the physical location of existing service infrastructure.

Legal, political or social factors

- The public agencies and private entities that manage habitat property along the river have different missions, objectives and procedures that must be recognized and accommodated.
- The SRCAF is working to develop a Good Neighbor Policy to address the interface between habitat and other land uses.

Financial factors

- While management coordination is intended to result in long term efficiencies, an initial and ongoing investment of staff time and management focus is required, though not currently funded.

❖ Environmental Impacts

The Comprehensive Management Plan was evaluated for its potential impact on the environment in accordance with the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). An Initial Study / Negative Declaration was prepared in accordance with the State CEQA Guidelines, which is included as Appendix K. The Initial Study concluded that this Plan, as proposed, will not have a potentially significant impact on the environment. Accordingly, a

proposed Negative Declaration, a finding that the project will not have a potentially significant impact on the environment, was prepared.

As required by the State CEQA Guidelines, the proposed Negative Declaration was forwarded to the State Clearinghouse for circulation and review by State agencies. Additionally, the document was provided to identified, interested parties, organizations and local agencies that request a copy of the document during a thirty-day public review period. A Notice of Intent to Adopt a Negative Declaration was filed with the County Clerks in each of the four counties and published as required by the State CEQA Guidelines. All written comments received to the proposed Negative Declaration are included in the Appendix B of this Plan. The proposed Negative Declaration was approved by the Director of the Department in conjunction with the approval of this Plan.